

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) is the principal advisor to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on policy development issues and is responsible for major activities in the areas of legislative and budget development, strategic planning, policy research and evaluation, and economic analysis.

The office develops or reviews issues from the viewpoint of the Secretary, providing a perspective that is broader in scope than the specific focus of the various operating agencies. ASPE also works closely with the HHS operating divisions. It assists these agencies in developing policies, and planning policy research, evaluation and data collection within broad HHS and administration initiatives. ASPE often serves a coordinating role for crosscutting policy and administrative activities.

ASPE plans and conducts evaluations and research—both in-house and through support of projects by external researchers—of current and proposed programs and topics of particular interest to the Secretary, the Administration, and the Congress.

Office of Disability, Aging, and Long-Term Care Policy

The Office of Disability, Aging, and Long-Term Care Policy (DALTCP) is responsible for the development, coordination, analysis, research, and evaluation of HHS policies and programs which support the independence, health, and long-term care of persons with disabilities—children, working age adults, and older persons. The office is also responsible for policy coordination and research to promote the economic and social well-being of the elderly.

In particular, the office addresses policies concerning nursing home and community-based services, informal caregiving, the integration of acute and long-term care, Medicare post-acute services and home care, managed care for people with disabilities, long-term rehabilitation services, children's disability, and linkages between employment and health policies. These activities are carried out through policy planning, policy and program analysis, regulatory reviews, formulation of legislative proposals, policy research, evaluation, and data planning.

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Understanding Medicaid Home and Community Services: A Primer

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Dear Reader,

Medicaid is the major public payer of long-term services and supports for millions of low-income Americans. When Medicaid was first enacted, payment for long-term services was made solely to institutions such as nursing homes. In the following decades, people with disabilities of all ages and their advocates played a significant role in the evolution of the Medicaid program. They asked for the resources they needed to live independently and the government responded. Medicaid now pays for a comprehensive range of home and community services that provide alternatives to unnecessary institutional care.

Many states have led the way in using Medicaid to design innovative and fiscally responsible long-term service programs. These programs enable people with significant disabilities to live in their communities and offer consumers more control over the services they receive. The recent Supreme Court decision in *Olmstead v L.C.* gives legal weight to this policy direction. In her July 28, 1999, address to the National Conference of State Legislatures, Secretary Shalala stated clearly that "The Olmstead decision defines our mission: To build better systems of supports enabling people with disabilities to live life to the fullest."

Since then, the Department has received numerous requests from state officials, consumers, and other stakeholders for information on how to use the Medicaid program to increase the availability of home and community services. Medicaid is a flexible program but it is also a complex program. It is no surprise that there are a host of questions about what is allowable under Medicaid law and regulation. We are pleased to offer this Primer on Medicaid Home and Community Services to serve as a reference guide. Its purpose is twofold:

- To explain how the Medicaid program can be used to expand access to a broad range of home and community services and supports for people of all ages with disabilities, and to promote consumer satisfaction and control;
- To encourage a fundamental approach to the support of persons with disabilities that minimizes reliance on institutions and maximizes community integration in the most cost-effective manner.

I believe this Primer will be a useful tool for all those working to expand home and community services and supports to enable people with disabilities to live in the most integrated settings appropriate to their needs.

This Primer would not have been possible without the commitment and hard work of many people. However, I want to recognize a few individuals whose outstanding efforts and dedication made this Primer a reality:

Janet O'Keeffe, whose extensive knowledge of long-term service policy combined with her energy, her talent for organizing large quantities of complex information, and her ability to work with multiple constituencies, enabled us to complete this project;

Gary Smith, the Primer's principal author, whose prodigious knowledge of the myriad details of the Medicaid program and whose ability to explain them in layperson's terms made this document possible;

Ruth Katz, who first suggested that ASPE develop a Primer to clearly explain the many ways in which Medicaid can be used to provide home and community services and supports, has provided invaluable vision and leadership throughout this project;

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As the Medicaid program evolves to meet the needs of its beneficiaries, new policy and clarifications of existing policy will be made subsequent to the publication of this Primer. These will be disseminated through State Medicaid Directors' Letters and the State Medicaid Manual, both of which are available on the Health Care Financing Administration's website.

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